THE ART EXHIBITION CATALOGUES OF THE CURT VALENTIN AND BUCHHOLZ GALLERIES REPUBLISHED ON MICROFICHE

Published on microfiche by:

Chadwyck-Healey Ltd
21 Bateman Street
Cambridge CB2 1NB
England

Somerset House
417 Maitland Avenue
Teaneck, NJ 07666
USA

Date of publication and production of master: 1976

Series: The purpose of this series is to make available those catalogues that have lasting interest through their text and illustrations. Catalogues and cumulations of titles in the series are available from the publishers.

Serial numbers: Each title is identified by a seven-figure serial number placed in the top right hand corner of the microfiche title strip. The first figure indicates the number of the list in which the title first appears. The first three-figure group signifies the gallery or museum; the second three-figure group the accession number for that title.

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Location of original: The National Art Library, Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

Technical data:

Producing laboratory: Micromedia Ltd, Kidlington, Oxford.

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MAILLOL

ARISTIDE
MAILLOL

[1861 – 1944]

February 6
March 3, 1951

BUCHHOLZ GALLERY
CURT VALENTIN
32 EAST 57TH STREET · NEW YORK

Grateful acknowledgment is made to Mr. Lucien Maillol, Banyuls-sur-Mer, France, for his cooperation in lending the greater part of the sculpture in the exhibition. In addition our thanks is extended to the Cranbrook Academy of Art, for lending No. 10 of the catalogue.

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19. I. 1951.

[21]

Nature and Synthesis by Aristide Maillol

We seek forms in nature, but we draw from these a composition in order to arrive at beauty. . . . "Nature is a dictionary" said Delacroix. One uses the dictionary to write a book, but the dictionary is not a book. The first thing that strikes you in Cézanne is not apples, but balance of tones. With elements drawn from nature, what did Shakespeare attempt? To create, to arouse powerful feeling, to awaken in the hearts of men that which is eternal in man.

One must synthesize. In youth we do so naturally, like the Negro sculptors who have reduced twenty forms to one. Maurice Denis' figures were made up

of two or three lines and a pleasant color, and by his simplification he has set an example of freshness, youth and tenderness in composition to all modern painting. We live in an epoch in which a great many things need to be synthesized. I should make better Egyptian sculpture than modern, and better gods than men.

The particular does not interest me; what matters to me is the general idea. In Michelangelo, so far removed from the art of Egypt, what fascinates you is the concept of power, the whole, the great point of view to which he committed himself. The *Slaves*, the *Tombs*, are sculpture made to be seen from one side only. For me, sculpture is the block; my figure, *France*, has more than twenty sides. I made her grow; she did not offer more than four. I had to keep working on her. Sculpture, for me, must have at least four sides.

Nature is deceptive. If I looked at her less, I would produce not the real, but the true. Art is complex, I said to Rodin, who smiled because he felt that I was struggling with nature. I was trying to simplify, whereas he noted all the profiles, all the details; it was a matter of conscience. In his figure, *Enthusiasm*, the smallest reliefs are noted with an unheard of scrupulousness.

When I made my first statuette in wood, I took a tree trunk and shaped it, trying to reproduce my general feeling about the grace of a woman. I have lost sight of that statuette. Thirty years later, looking at a photograph of it, I took it for Chinese sculpture. It seemed to me to have come out of another epoch. I had no other thought than to carve a beautiful form from the wood. That gave me the key to what the Ancients did.

It was only after having worked hard that I got excited about Tanagras. When I was painting, I had nothing to do with the Greeks. I was not inter-

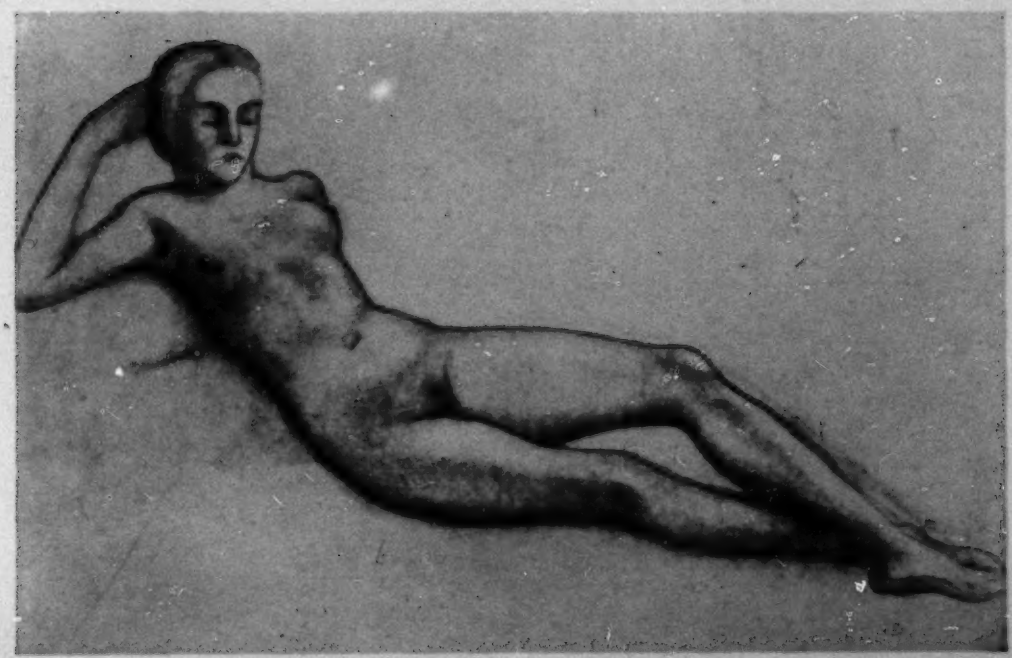
ested in Rodin until much later; I worked without him. . . . What is appealing in my figures is the feeling I have put into them, something not self-explanatory. Some critics have written, à propos of the figure I call *Night*, that I am a sculptor concerned with the reproduction of form, without a preliminary idea as a point of departure, and they are surprised that I call it *Night*. Under such circumstances, we should call Michelangelo's *Night* a "Contorted Woman" and believe he wanted to produce something other than a contorted woman.

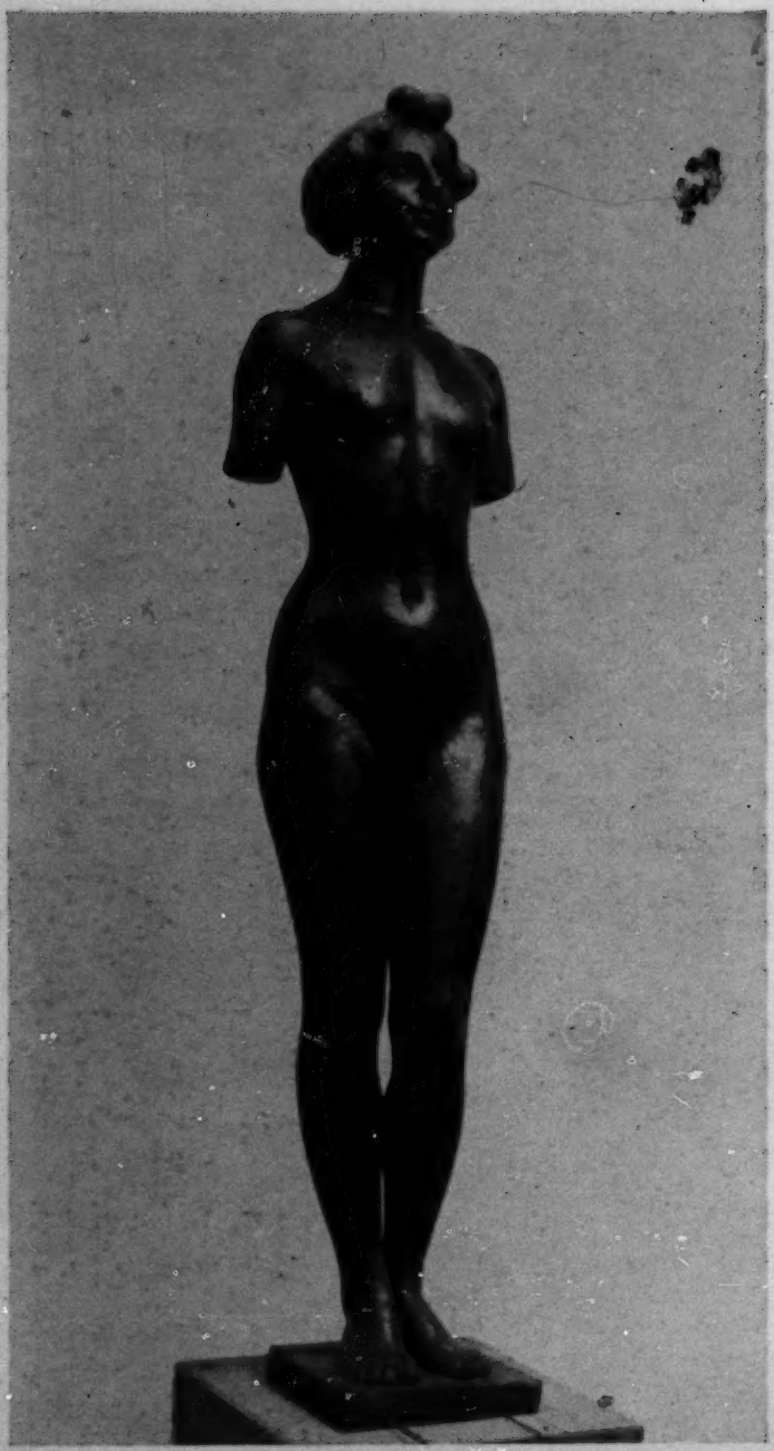
Others have maintained that I do not love Nature; I love no one else! Whatever I have made I have found in her; but one must interpret her. That alone counts. The public does not know it; people are ignorant; that is why we have to keep saying the same thing over again. The great difficulty is to pass from study to art. . . . An archaeologist has said that if one should suddenly en-

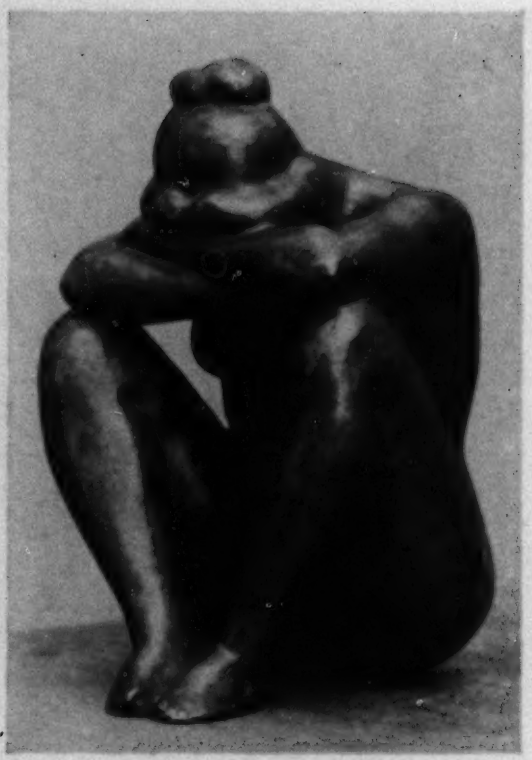
counter the *Venus de Milo* in the street one could not endure her gaze! What nonsense! The *Venus de Milo* is a beautiful girl, "a young girl who puts herself forward" said Matisse. Where I live, in Banyuls, there are three hundred Venus de Milos. The *Kores* are alive; they are the young girls whom the Greeks saw in the street. Only, the Greeks put into them the feeling with which all young girls inspired them. . . .

I did not arrive at this idea of synthesis by a process of reasoning, but through the study of Nature, from which I have drawn directly and according to my feeling.

from Judith Cladel
Aristide Maillol, *Sa vie—Son oeuvre—Ses idées.*
Editions Bernard Grasset
Translation by Katharine B. Neilson.







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CATALOGUE*

*All dates are approximate

SCULPTURE

[1] Woman Arranging Her Hair
1898. Bronze. H. 10¾"

[2] Kneeling Woman
1900. Bronze. H. 7½"

[3] Women Wrestlers
1901. Bronze. H. 7"

[4] Night
1902. Bronze. H. 6¼"

[5] Nude, Arm over Eyes
1905. Bronze. H. 8¼"

[6] Seated Nude
1905. Bronze. H. 9"

[7] Seated Nude Bending Forward
1905. Bronze. H. 8½"

[15]

[1]

[7]

[12]

[8] Study for *Monument de Blanqui* in Puget-Théniers
1906. Bronze. H. 12"

[9] Portrait of Auguste Renoir
1907. Bronze. H. 15"

[10] Ile de France (small version)
1910. Bronze. H. 31½"

[11] Torso (Ile de France)
1910. Bronze. H. 43"

[12] Seated Nude
1910. Terracotta. H. 9½"

[13] Summer
1910. Bronze. H. 64"

[14] Spring
1910. Bronze. H. 67"

[15] Standing Nude
1910. Terracotta. H. 10½"

[16] Study for Cezanne Memorial, I
1912. Bronze. H. 7½"
L. 12¼"

[17] Study for Cezanne Memorial, II
1912. Bronze. H. 7½"
L. 11¼"

[18] Head of a Woman
1915. Bronze. H. 8½"

[19] Ornament for a Door
1930. Bronze. H. 14"

[20] Woman with Crab
1930. Bronze. H. 6½"

[21] Monument for Claude Debussy
1931. Bronze. H. 35"

[18]

[9]

[22] Torso
1937. Bronze. H. 43"

[23] Harmony (last work)
1944. Bronze. H. 62"

DRAWINGS

[24] Seated Nude Bending Forward
Red chalk. 39 x 29¾"

[25] Reclining Nude
Charcoal. 20⅜ x 29¾"

[26] Standing Nude
Charcoal. 34¾ x 25"

[27] Reclining Nude
Crayon. 7½ x 11½"

[28] Standing Nude
Charcoal. 11½ x 7¼"

[29] Nude Bending Forward
Red chalk. 10 x 13¾"

[30] Crouching Nude
Charcoal. 8¼ x 11¼"

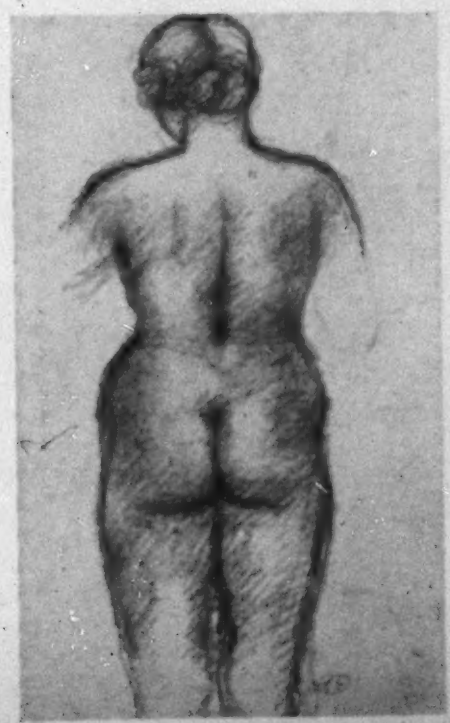
[31] Standing Nude
Charcoal. 13 x 8¼"

[32] Standing Nude
Charcoal. 12¼ x 7¾"

[33] Standing Nude
Red chalk. 13½ x 8¼"

[34-40] Lithographs

[31]



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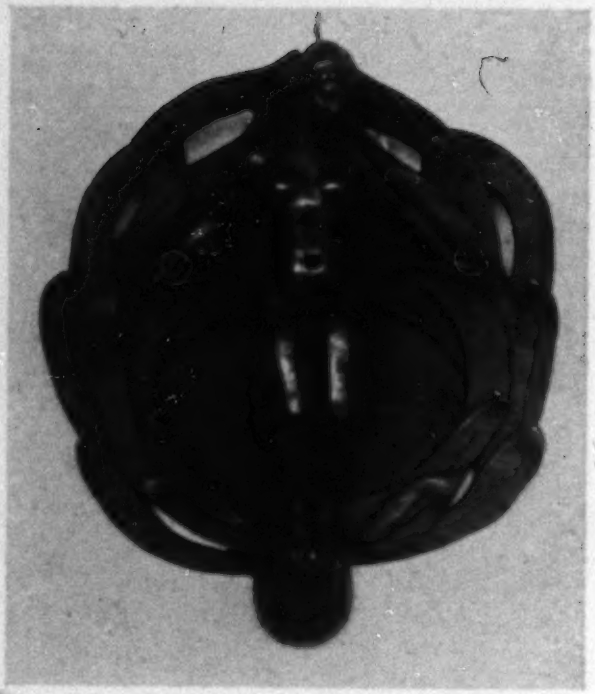

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